[President.]

CONSERVATION OF MONSOON RAIN WATER.

A scheme for the control and conservation of monsoon rain water by constructing suitable reservoir dams along the sources of rivers so as to regulate the flow of water and to prevent the silting of rivers in times of flood and the inrush of brine at other times is also under investigation and will be taken up early.

THOTTAPALLY SPILLWAY AND BRIDGE.

The existing facilities for the drainage of flood water in Kuttanad are poor and unsatisfactory. During monsoons the lower regions in Kuttanad remain submerged under more than five feet of water. It is proposed to construct a spillway at Thottapally with banks on either side of the channel with twenty feet top width. The channel itself will be 1200 feet wide and where it cuts the Quilon-Alleppey road it is proposed to put up an Ascu treated timber bridge. The investigation and survey are in progress and the construction of the bridge and the spillway will be taken up after the fixing of alignment of the road and the acquisition of the land. The approximate cost of the whole work will be Rs. 3,50,000.

I now turn to a topic which has aroused some controversy; and that is, our policy with regard to Jaffna tobacco and the imposition of slightly enhanced duty on it. I am now turning from direct to indirect taxation. Jaffna tobacco is now taxed at Rs 135 for a candy of 660 lbs. whereas in British India, a candy is taxed at Rs 1,650. This arrangement was brought about because the people of Travancore have cultivated and maintained an abiding taste for the particular method of curing adopted in what is called 'Jaffna tobacco'. That was the reason why, many many years ago, a certain special power or privilege was vested in the Government of Travancore for the levy of differential and favourable rates of duty on Jaffna tobacco with a view to stimulate its import into the State. To the extent to which that was done, we have crippled our own tobacco production notwithstanding the fact that there are large tracts within the State itself capable of raising tobacco, good tobacco; and it is not beyond the wit of man to devise a method by which the particular kind of curing is adopted by ourselves which gives Jaffna tobacco that flavour which commends itself to the palates or mouths of the people of Travancore. Surely, it was not beyond our capacity to devise some method of producing here a suitable substitute for Jaffna tobacco. But we have not done that. All the same, having regard to our revenue demands, purely for revenue purposes, we have now raised the duty on Jaffna tobacco from Rs 135 per candy to Rs 200. We have not yet concerned ourselves with the question of retaliatory measures against the repatriation or tariff policy of Ceylon. It is not my object now—nor will it be appropriate—to speak fully on that topic at this juncture. But, let it be remembered by Ceylon that one of our very flourishing trades was practically, annihilated by the heavy import duty imposed a few years ago by the Ceylon Government of Travancore eggs. Let it be remembered that Travancore, like the neighbouring State and the neighbouring districts of British India, is suffering on

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